

HUMAN RESOURCES BULLETIN 01-05 14 May 2001

Important Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Open Season Information & Hints:

Open Season Dates: 15 May – 31 July 2001

Due to required system changes at the Army Benefits Center-Civilian (ABC-C), employees will be unable to make TSP open season elections until approximately 23 May. However, open season runs for 10 weeks, and any elections made up through 30 June will still be effective 1 July. In the meantime, changes can be made at TSP to reallocate future contributions between the five funds, or to perform interfund transfers to move previous contributions/monies into different accounts.

Links for Information:

The ABC-C Home Page at www.abc.army.mil and the TSP website at www.tsp.gov.

New Options:

Beginning with this open season, newly hired or rehired federal employees can begin making employee contributions to TSP within 60 days of being hired. Recently hired employees currently in a waiting period can also begin making contributions to TSP during the May 2001 Open Season. (Rules pertaining to agency matching contributions remain unchanged.)

Contribution of an additional 1% of base pay can be made to TSP (up to 11% FERS; 6% CSRS).

Two new investment funds are available - S Fund and I Fund. The five investment funds are broken down into two types. Fixed income funds: Government Securities Investment (G) Fund, and Fixed Income Index Investment (F) Fund. Stock Funds: Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund, Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment (S) Fund, and International Stock Index Investment (I) Fund.

How To Make It Happen – Part I – ABC-C:

IF you want to **enroll** into TSP to begin making contributions to a TSP account, go to the **ABC-C!**

- Call the ABC-C toll free Interactive Voice Response System (IVRS) number at **1-877-ARMY-CTR** (which translates to 1-877-276-9287). Access requires the SS# and a 4 digit pin. Initially, your PIN will be a four-digit number equivalent to your month and year of birth (MMYY). For security purposes, once you access the system, you must change it to a new 6-digit PIN. Or ...
- Log onto the ABC-C website on the Internet at www.abc.army.mil. Access requires the SS#, an 8-digit password, and a 6-digit PIN.

ABC TIP 1: Using IVRS, the toll free number, is the easiest way to make elections with ABC!!

IF, during the open season, you want to make changes in the amount of future contributions to TSP, go to **ABC-C** as shown above at 1-877-ARMY-CTR or www.abc.army.mil.

If you want to **cancel** contributions to your TSP account, you must also use the **ABC-C**. Although contributions can be canceled anytime, there are restrictions to restarting contributions once canceled.

Remember, ABC-C can only be reached through the two methods above (internet or telephone). After the required system changes are made around 23 May, both methods will be available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

ABC TIP 2: Do not submit a TSP-1 Form. ABC-C is fully automated and will not accept hard copy forms.

How To Make It Happen – Part II - TSP:

Once you have been to ABC to start, or increase, those contributions into your very own Thrift Savings Plan account, you are ready to start managing your retirement savings at **TSP!!**

IF you want to allocate future contributions among the five TSP Investment Funds, you go directly to TSP. Allocations can be made anytime using the following methods.

- Log onto a computer, access the Internet, and go to the TSP website at www.tsp.gov. Access requires SSN# and a 4-digit PIN.
- Telephone: ThriftLine (504) 255-8777. TDD line for deaf and hard-of-hearing is (504)-255-5113. Access requires a SSN# and 4-digit PIN.
- TSP-50, Investment Allocation Form (Originals Only). While the TSP-50 can be used, it is highly discouraged since it is not yet available electronically, and the obsolete Form 30 cannot be used. TSP-50 can be obtained from the CPAC and mailed directly to the TSP Service Office.

IF you want to make interfund transfers to redistribute existing account balances between the five funds, go to the TSP website at www.tsp.gov, ThriftLine (504) 255-8777, or obtain Form TSP-50.

Before you leave either of the electronic systems when transacting business, here are three little tips for success:

--TSP Tip 1: Enter the percent of the total account balance to have invested in each fund.

--TSP Tip 2: Percentages can be stated in 1 percent increments and must total 100 percent.

--TSP Tip 3: Be sure to confirm the percentages, per instructions on the website/ThriftLine, or the transfer will not be effective.

Training Opportunities

Nominations for Federal Executive Institute (FEI) are due to LRD-HR by 15 Jun 2001. If you are interested in applying, forms and instructions for completing the packages can be found at www.cpol.army.mil/train/catalog/ch04fei.html.

Excused Absence for Preventive Health Screenings

OPM has published additional information on the January 4, 2001 executive memorandum that allows Federal employees to take an extra 4 hours of excused absence each year to participate in preventive health screenings. The information is provided in a question and answer format. Briefly, it states that federal employees who have fewer than 80 hours of sick leave to their credit are eligible to use 4 hours of excused absence each leave year for preventive health screenings. Those with 80 hours or more of accrued sick leave are not eligible, since they have sufficient reserves of leave to participate in such screenings. Agencies may also grant excused absence to participate in preventive health screenings such as smoking cessation, nutrition education, and annual health fairs, as long as the services are sponsored by the employee's agency. The four hours of excused absence may not be taken to accompany a family member to a preventive health screening. For additional information, visit the OPM website at <http://www.opm.gov/ehs/qsas.htm>

/s/

WILLIAM D. ST. JOHN
Director of Human Resources